NOTES

"BIRTHDAY" WAS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN TWO PARTS IN THE FEB 2000 ISSUE OF JUNE MAGAZINE. IT WAS MADE AVAILABLE IN COLLECTED FORM FOR THE FIRST TIME FROM CHARA 5 YEARS LATER, COUPLED WITH "DOKUSAISHA GRANADA".

Birthday 前編

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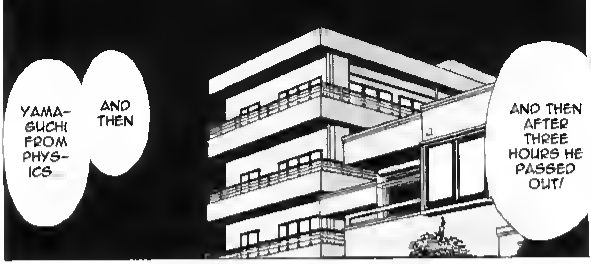
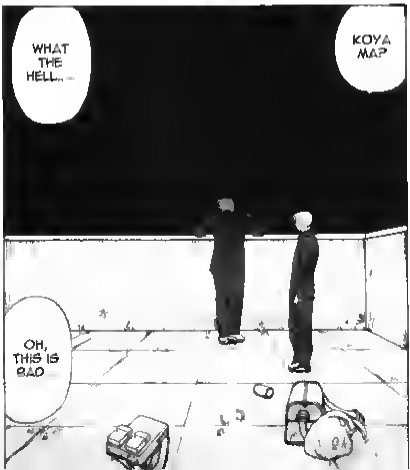

YAMA-GUCHI FROM PHYS-ICS
AND THEN
AND THEN AFTER THREE HOURS HE PASSED OUT!

KOYA MAA?
HEY KOYAMA, GIMME A WIN-STON----
GYA HAH AHA HAA


WHAT THE HELL...
KOYA MA?
OH, THIS IS BAD

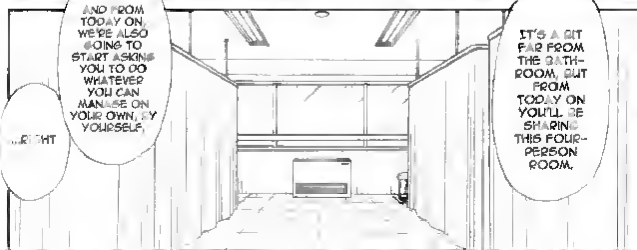
dos
ooo

.....
KOYAMA-SAN, TODAY WE'RE GOING TO MOVE YOU FROM RECOVERY INTO THE MAIN WARD
I SUPPOSE THERE COULD BE ISSUES AT HOME BUT WHAT SORT OF THING COULD JUSTIFY THAT...?
DID THAT BOY'S PARENTS EVER COME TO VISIT HIM? I HAVEN'T SEEN THEM ONCE SINCE HE WAS HOSPITALIZED! NOT EVEN ONCE!
REALLY
WELL, LET'S GATHER YOUR THINGS!!
...RIGHT
YOU'RE STILL YOUNG, SO IF WE DON'T DO SOME REHABILITATION YOU MAY FIND SOME SIDE-EFFECTS FROM THIS ACCIDENT DOWN THE LINE!!

...RIGHT
YOU'RE DOING GREAT!! ONE STEP AT A TIME.

MAKOTO!! WE'LL BE RIGHT BACK TO VISIT AGAIN TOMORROW.
YEP.
DO YOU HAVE ANY MORE LAUNDRY? THIS IS IT?
YEP. THAT'S ALL.

KEH
SO THAT'S THE LITTLE PRINCE WITH THE PRIVATE ROOM.


...RIGHT
AND FROM TODAY ON, WE'RE ALSO GOING TO START ASKING YOU TO DO WHATEVER YOU CAN MANAGE ON YOUR OWN, BY YOURSELF.
IT'S A BIT FAR FROM THE BATHROOM, BUT FROM TODAY ON YOU'LL BE SHARING THIS FOUR-PERSON ROOM.

I DON'T WANT TO LISTEN TO MY WALKMAN OR WATCH TV
DON'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING--
DID YOU GET ANY SLEEP? I BROUGHT YOU SOME FLOWERS.
OH, HEY
I'M HERE TO VISIT GRANDPA
I BROUGHT YOU SOME OOLONG TEA TOO!
HEY, I BROUGHT YOU A NEW MAGAZINE
GRANDMA, IT'S TIME TO TAKE YOUR TEMPERATURE
I WONDER WHEN I'LL BE ABLE TO GET OUT OF HERE? AND WHAT'LL HAPPEN THEN I WONDER...
I GUESS DAD AND MOM BOTH HAVE TESTS RIGHT ABOUT NOW
A
AH

BUT BEYOND THAT, THE TIME STRETCHES ON FOREVER
IN BETWEEN SPURTS OF TESTS EXAMINATIONS REHABILITATION
EVERY DAY AT THE HOSPITAL IS THE SAME. EVERY DAY WE'RE UP AT 6 IN THE MORNING. AT SEVEN, BREAKFAST. NOON, LUNCH. NINE, LIGHTS OUT.
AAH
BUMP
HEY!! BASTARD!! APOLOGIZE!!
IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS! AND IT WASN'T MY FAULT!
WHAT THE HELL, THE LITTLE PRINCE, HUH?!
KURO-CHAN...
HOW'D YOU LIKE IT IF THIS WAS YOUR DINNER?!

fuu
YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE YOU MAKE ME LAUGH!
IDIOT. WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ME ANY-WAY?!
NO IT'S NOT, AUNTIE.
IT'S OKAY, KUBO...
KIDS LIKE THIS ARE SPOILED AND RUDE, THEY'LL NEVER LAST IN THE WORLD IF THEY'DE NOT HELD ACCOUNT-ABLE
APOLO-GIZE!!
DON'T BUMP OTHER PEOPLE !!
BULLIES LIKE YOU ARE A DIME A DOZEN THESE DAYS---AREN'T THEY!!
SNA!
CK
KOYA MA-SAN!
TAKA SHI!!

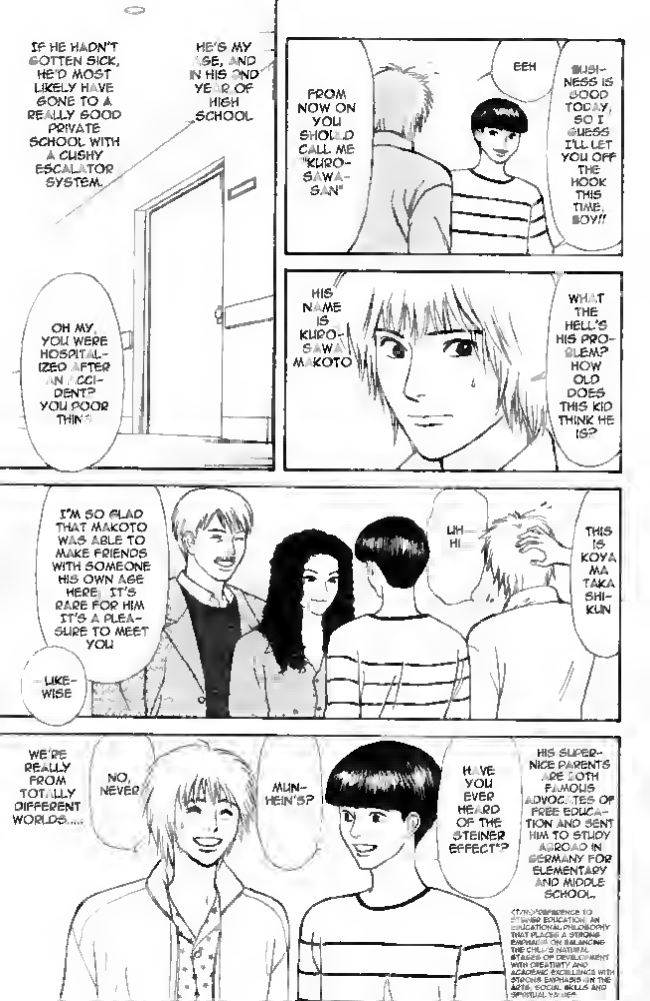
KURO-SAWA-SAN!!
WHAT DID I TELL YA! HE'S A PUNK!!
MOM!
WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU DOING?!
I'LL GET A SUPER-VISOR!!
IS THIS A HOSPITAL OR AN OLD-FOLKS-HOME? WITH SO MANY OLD PEOPLE AROUND, YOU'LL HAVE TO WATCH OUT FOR ONES WHO CAN'T SEE YOU WELL.
THEN IT WAS THE FAULT OF THE WOMAN WHO WASN'T PAYING ATTENTION
THE HEAD NURSE FILED A COMPLAINT, BUT IF IT'S LIKE YOU SAID
I DON'T KNOW WHY JUST TALKING TO MY MOM IRRITATED ME SO MUCH, BUT...
A-ALRIGHT, IF YOU SAY SO.... AT LEAST CALL ME, WILL YOU?
THE REGISTERS AT THE SUPER-MARKET ARE BUSY, RIGHT? I TOLD YOU THAT YOU DIDN'T NEED TO SKIP WORK TO VISIT ME HERE!!
EH?
DON'T VISIT ME

SOMEHOW, JUST TALKING TO PEOPLE THAT MUCH MAKES ME TIRED...
BUT IF SHE COMES HERE I'LL END UP FEELING LIKE I OWE HER SOMETHING AND DAD'LL GET PISSED OFF.
I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING, I WAS REALLY THINKING,
HE CAN'T HAVE BEEN SERIOUS
"DON'T BUMP OTHER PEOPLE!"
BULLIES LIKE YOU APE'A DIME A DOZEN THESE DAYS, AREN'T THEY!!"

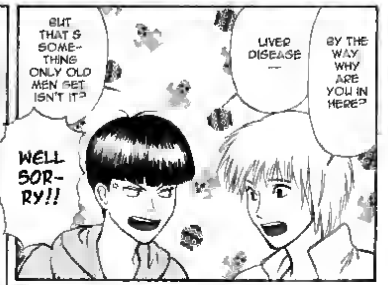
<SFX> CLICK
HM
ARE YOU ATTACK-ING THIS TIME?
?
HEY
Meeting Lobby
面会

I'M KIND OF VIOLENT AND HAVE TROUBLE HOLDING MY MOUTH WHEN CONFRONTING PEOPLE
UM WELL, I GUESS
HEY, KURO-CHAN
WHY DID YOU TALK TO ME LIKE THAT YESTERDAY?
UM
HO HOU
YOU SHOULD APOLOGIZE
HEY WHO'S NEXT?
BUT EITHER WAY
BUT SINCE YOU RESPONDED TO WHAT I SAID THAT WAY, I WON, DIDN'T I?
PLAY NICE, KURO-CHAN

CHECK
CLICK
I WIN!!
I'M THE KING OF THE LOBBY!!
OOOOOOH
clap clap clap

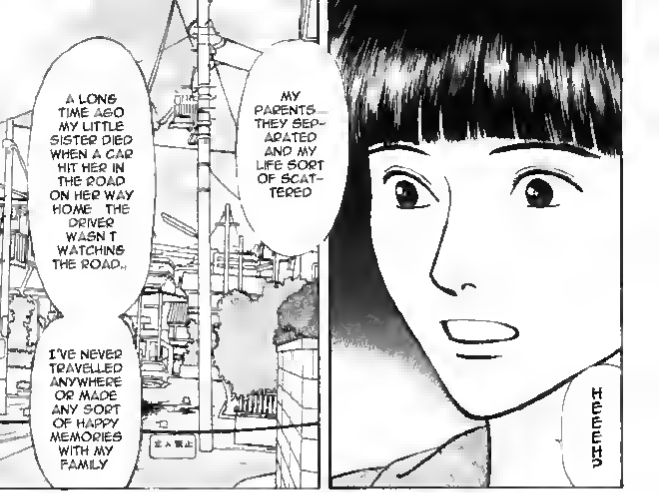

IF HE HADN'T GOTTEN SICK, HE'D MOST LIKELY HAVE GONE TO A REALLY GOOD PRIVATE SCHOOL WITH A CUSHY ESCALATOR SYSTEM.
HE'S MY AGE, AND IN HIS 2ND YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL
OH MY, YOU WERE HOSPITALIZED AFTER AN ACCIDENT? YOU POOR THING
EEH
BUSINESS IS GOOD TODAY, SO I GUESS I'LL LET YOU OFF THE HOOK THIS TIME, BOY!!
FROM NOW ON YOU SHOULD CALL ME "KURO-SAWA-SAN"
HIS NAME IS KURO-SAWA MAKOTO
WHAT THE HELL'S HIS PROBLEM? HOW OLD DOES THIS KID THINK HE IS?
I'M SO GLAD THAT MAKOTO WAS ABLE TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH SOMEONE HIS OWN AGE HERE. IT'S RARE FOR HIM IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU
LIKEWISE
UH HI
THIS IS KOYAMA TAKASHI-KUN
WE'RE REALLY FROM TOTALLY DIFFERENT WORLDS....
NO, NEVER
MUNHEIN'S?
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE STEINER EFFECT"?
HIS SUPER-NICE PARENTS ARE BOTH FAMOUS ADVOCATES OF FREE EDUCATION AND SENT HIM TO STUDY ABROAD IN GERMANY FOR ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL.
(T/N) REFERENCE TO STEINER EDUCATION, AN EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY THAT PLACES A STRONG EMPHASIS ON BALANCING THE CHILD'S NATURAL STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT WITH CREATIVITY AND ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE WITH STRONG EMPHASIS ON THE ARTS, SOCIAL SKILLS AND SPIRITUAL VALUES.

HE'S NOTHING LIKE THE SORT OF FRIEND I'D HAVE GONE OUT AND MADE UNDER NORMAL CIR-CUMSTANCES
THAT'S THE DEPART-MENT STORE AND THE MOVIE THEATRE..
AND THERE'S THE ZOO I WENT TO WHEN I WAS JUST A BRAT
THAT PENT-HOUSE OVER THERE'S MY HOUSE
THERE'S A REALLY DELICIOUS RAMEN SHOP CLOSE BY; WHEN WE GET OUT, WE SHOULD GO TOGETHER SOME TIME!!


BY THE WAY WHY ARE YOU IN HERE?
LIVER DISEASE —
BUT THAT'S SOME-THING ONLY OLD MEN GET ISN'T IT?
WELL SOR-RY!!

DID YOU KNOW THAT A LOT OF THE OLD PEOPLE HERE WANT TO COMMIT SUICIDE BECAUSE THEIR FAMILIES HAVE GIVEN UP ON THEM?
EEH?
IF YOU SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT YOU'LL JUST GET REALLY SAD AND YOU'LL STRESS OUT EVEN MORE
OH COME ON, YOUR FAMILY SAID THEY WERE REALLY BUSY, DIDN'T THEY?
AT MY AGE, THEY PROBABLY THINK IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR ME TO JUST DIE AND HAVE IT OVER WITH
PSST, KUBO
IT DOESN'T MATTER MY DAUGHTER DOESN'T EVEN COME TO VISIT ME ANYMORE
---I GUESS IT IS
YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING, DO YOU?
IT'S REALLY KIND OF AMAZING THE DIFFERENCE JUST HAVING SOMEONE BESIDE YOU IN HARD TIMES CAN MAKE, ISN'T IT?
HOHO
I KNOW YOU'RE A PAIN IN THE ASS!!

HE ALWAYS KNEW SO MUCH MORE THAN I DID
I'VE READ ALL THESE
THIS ONE'S A BOOK ON THE ABORIGINAL TRIBES OF AUSTRALIA
AND A JACKSON POLLAK ARTBOOK THIS ONE'S PRETTY COOL
THIS ONE OVER HERE'S A MANUAL ON MOVIE DIRECTING
I BET YOU NEVER COULD'VE READ THIS MANY BOOKS HUH?
図書室
ARE YOU MAKING FUN OF ME?
NO I MEANT BECAUSE YOU WEREN'T SICK LIKE ME
WHEN YOU'RE YOUNG THERE'S PLENTY OF FUN TO BE HAD JUST LIVING NORMALLY
THAT'S NOT NECESSARILY TRUE
I'M HERE BECAUSE OF WHAT EVERYONE CALLS AN ACCIDENT, BUT
I THINK YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO CALL IT A SUICIDE ATTEMPT


MY PARENTS... THEY SEPARATED AND MY LIFE SORT OF SCATTERED
A LONG TIME AGO MY LITTLE SISTER DIED WHEN A CAR HIT HER IN THE ROAD ON HER WAY HOME. THE DRIVER WASN'T WATCHING THE ROAD...
I'VE NEVER TRAVELLED ANYWHERE OR MADE ANY SORT OF HAPPY MEMORIES WITH MY FAMILY
立入禁止
HISEMI

I WAS TIRED OF GOING HOME, SO I'D STAY WITH MY FRIENDS OR JUST HANG OUT ALL NIGHT IN FRONT OF CONVENIENCE STORES.
BUT I HAD NO AMBITION
WHEN I RAN OUT OF MONEY, I JUST SHOPLIFTED...

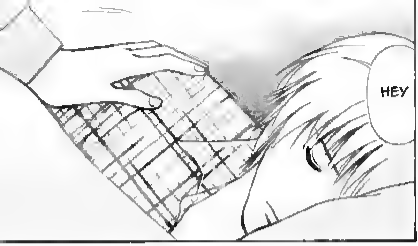
I WAS WALKING ALONG THE EDGE OF AN APARTMENT BUILDING ROOF FOR THE HELL OF IT.
IF I TOOK JUST ONE STEP...
I COULD GO TO SOME OTHER PLACE... I COULD RESET EVERYTHING

...TRUTH IS...
GETTING HURT WAS JUST ANOTHER IN A LONG LINE OF FAILURES
THE BOTH OF US HAVE PLENTY OF TIME TO THINK STUFF OVER WHILE WE'RE IN HERE!
BUT I'M SURE THAT GETTING HURT IMPROVED YOUR OUTLOOK ON LIFE JUST A BIT.
YOU MUST'VE BEEN A PRETTY SHALLOW GUY BACK THEN.
EEH, THAT'S A NEW ONE. I CAN'T SAY I FEEL SORRY FOR YOU, BUT I GUESS YOU FELT PRETTY LOUSY FOR YOURSELF, HUH?
WELL, SUFFERING AND FEELING LOST IS ALL PART OF LIVING, ISN'T IT?
YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE ME MAKE YOU LAUGH

WELL, THIS ONE'S A REAL BRAT SO I'VE MADE IT MY DUTY TO LOOK OUT FOR HIM
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU CALLIN' A BRAT WITH A HAIRCUT LIKE AN 8 YEAR-OLD?!
WELL, YOU TWO'VE COZIED UP QUITE A BIT HAVEN'T YA?
GUITARIST BRIAN JONES, HAD THIS HAIRCUT
THAT'S THE REAL REASON THE ROLLING STONES
THE STONES ARE ALREADY BROKEN-DOWN OLD MEN AREN'T THEY?
WHAT THE HELL?
ARE YOU SERIOUS
THIS IS THE MAKOTO-CHAN SHINA-TURE CUT!!
BRIAN JONES
HAVE A FEW MORE MANNERS, WILL YA?!
I DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TO THINK ABOUT IT. I KNOW YOUR TYPE LIKE THE BACK OF MY HAND!
HOW'D YOU KNOW I LIKE B'Z?!
AND THAT'S DIFFERENT FROM LIKING B'Z? HOW?

<TN:> POPULAR JAPANESE ROCK DUO. ALSO MIDDLE AGED

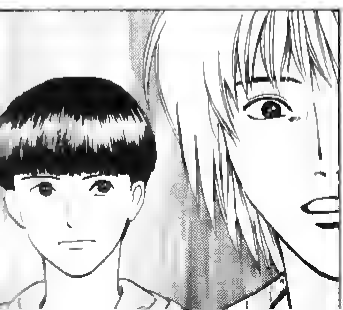
IS THAT YOU AGAIN, KOYAMA-SAN? YOU'RE IN HERE AN AWFUL LOT THESE DAYS AREN'T YOU?
UHH... YEAH...
AH- OKAY
SORRY TO BOTHER YOU-- BUT IT'S TIME FOR YOUR TEMP--
THE OLDER WOMAN [I BUMPED] INTO IN THE WARD WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE INTENSIVE CARE UNIT.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH HER? SHE GONNA BE OKAY?
THIS PARTICULAR NIGHT
HURRY
CONTACT THE FAMILY
YOU'RE SO STRICT ABOUT EVERYTHING
YOU NEED YOUR FAMILY NEAR YOU.
THERE'S SO MUCH TRUST AND EXPECTATION INHERENT IN THAT, ISN'T THERE?
LOOKS LIKE HER FAMILY STILL HASN'T COME. NOT THAT I EXPECTED THEM TO
DUN NO


HEY

SOMEHOW THAT NIGHT SEEMED VERY LONG
I WAS ASLEEP THROUGH MOST OF IT
BUT EARLY THE NEXT MORNING

THE MEN IN BLACK ARE HERE
MEN? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

UWAAA



YES, I'VE MADE ARRANGE-MENTS WITH THE FUNERAL HALL BUT...
...THANK YOU...

IT RAINED LAST NIGHT, SO YOU CAN SMELL THE EARTH
IT TURNED OUT THAT THAT OLD WOMAN HAD DIED... AND THAT HER FAMILY HADN'T REALLY GIVEN UP ON HER AFTER ALL
OH...
THEY'RE THINKING OF PUTTING ME BACK ON SOMETHING TO REGULATE MY LIVER FUNCTION
BESIDES BLOOD-WORK AND A MED-DRIP
HAVE ANY PLANS TOMORROW?
I CAME TO THE LIBRARY HERE AND READ EVERY BOOK, ONE AFTER THE OTHER, READING AND LEARNING EVERYTHING I COULD ABOUT THE WORLD
WHEN I FOUND OUT THAT I WAS SICK, I WANTED TO GROW UP RIGHT AWAY

KURO
BUT IT WAS NO USE
I CAME TO REALIZE
THAT WHEN MOST PEOPLE ARE BORN, THEY PROBABLY DON'T EVEN REALIZE THE BEST PARTS OF THEIR LIFE UNTIL THEY'RE GONE
FOR SOME REASON THAT DAY

I REMEMBERED THE BEAUTY OF A FARAWAY VILLAGE AT NIGHT
MY SISTER, STILL ALIVE, AND MY ENTIRE FAMILY HAD GONE TO VISIT MY FATHER'S HOMETOWN
TO WATCH THE LIGHTS AS THEY FLOATED DOWN THE RIVER

Birthday END

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